



Morning Alert - Wednesday, December 27, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning News

Broadcasters continued to give intensive coverage to the blizzard in Hokkaido with the exception of TV-Asahi, which led with the scandal involving the Japan Sumo Association.

Top stories in national dailies included the Labor Ministry's instruction to Nomura Real Estate to rectify its practice of unpaid overtime (Asahi); the continued persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar (Mainichi); a GOJ plan to launch a study on quantum encryption for confidential communications (Yomiuri); a METI plan to establish ground rules for sharing profits from AI products (Nikkei); and a plan by prosecutors to indict three crew members of a North Korean fishing boat for theft of a power generator and other equipment from a facility on an island off Hokkaido (Sankei).

SECURITY

Defense ministry mulls conversion of Izumo into aircraft carrier

Asahi front-paged a report saying that it has learned from several Defense Ministry sources that the ministry is studying the idea of converting the helicopter carrier Izumo into a flattop for carrying F-35Bs. The paper wrote that if the renovation gives the Izumo the ability to attack enemy bases, it may bring a major shift in the defense policy of Japan, which does not possess offensive weapons to uphold its strictly defense-oriented policy under Article 9 of the Constitution. The paper wrote that although Defense Minister Onodera told reporters on Tuesday that no concrete study of the idea is underway, he added that it is necessary to study various ideas regularly. Sankei and Tokyo Shimbun ran similar inside-page reports.

U.S. Pacific commander asks defense minister to restrict drone flights over military facilities

Asahi front-paged a report saying that it has learned from several GOJ sources that PACOM Commander Harris at his meeting with Defense Minister Onodera in Tokyo on Nov. 16 asked him to restrict drone flights over U.S. military installations in Japan. The paper wrote that the admiral told the defense minister that drones were frequently seen flying over Camp Schwab and this is very dangerous because they may collide with U.S. military aircraft. The paper wrote that the GOJ has begun reviewing relevant laws in response to the request from the U.S. military because airspace over U.S. military facilities is not covered by existing aviation regulations in Japan.

GOJ to conduct missile attack drill in Tokyo

Yomiuri and Sankei wrote that the GOJ announced on Tuesday that it will conduct an evacuation drill in Tokyo's Bunkyo Ward on Jan. 22 under the scenario of a ballistic missile attack. This will be the first time for such a drill to be conducted in Tokyo. Some 250 local residents are expected to participate in the drill to be carried out at several subway stations and other facilities.

INTERNATIONAL

Trilateral summit with China, ROK likely to be held in March or later

Yomiuri wrote that it has learned from several GOJ sources that a trilateral summit between Japan, China, and South Korea will likely be delayed until March or later because Beijing recently told the GOJ that it would be difficult for China to participate in the envisaged summit ahead of a meeting of the National People's Congress in March.

Foreign Minister Kono mulls visit to Myanmar

Yomiuri wrote that Foreign Minister Kono is making arrangements to visit Myanmar on Jan. 11-13. According to the paper, Kono plans to visit Rakhine State, where violence against Rohingya Muslims broke out. The paper wrote that if realized, this will be the first visit to the region by a foreign minister of a major country since the clash between the government security force and a Rohingya militant group escalated in August. Mainichi and Sankei wrote that MOFA announced on Tuesday that Kono will visit Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives from Jan. 3 through 7.

GOJ decides to appoint Sugiyama next envoy to U.S.

Nikkei wrote that the GOJ decided on Tuesday to appoint Vice Foreign Minister Sugiyama as the next Japanese ambassador to the U.S. and to promote Deputy Foreign Minister Akiba to the post of vice foreign minister. The paper wrote that the GOJ plans to make an official decision at a cabinet meeting in January.

SOCIETY

Turnout of teenage voters below average

All papers reported on an announcement on Tuesday by the Ministry of Internal Affairs that the average turnout of voters aged 18 and 19 in the general election in October was 40.49%, which was

lower than the average of all voters, at 53.68%. According to the ministry, the turnout of 18 year-olds stood at 47.87%, while that of 19-years-olds was 33.25%.

